



COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY

Tips for Coping with Your Emotions during Election Season

Do something productive. Whatever your negative feelings are now, it's wise to guard against those feelings turning into helplessness and hopelessness, which can be particularly destructive if they set in. To help prevent this, do normal, productive things and maintain your routine. Do things that give you a temporary sense of having some control, even if it's cleaning out your freezer. Focus on tasks that help you feel useful.

Reach out to others with supportive messages. Offering support to others is a way for you to feel better. If you know someone who has a particular fear or other negative reaction as a result of the election, reach out to that person and let them know you're thinking of them. The same goes for anyone you know is going through a difficult time for reasons unrelated to the election. For example, if you know someone who is having cancer treatments, make sure that person doesn't feel forgotten in the election aftermath.

Pay attention to which forms of debriefing help you and which don't. Monitor your media use and check your reactions before and after taking in the information. Consider setting time limits on your consumption. You may find that you need to step back from social media or the news if you find those outlets start making your feelings intensify. Identify who you can discuss the results with in a way that's helpful to you rather than reaching out to those who work you up further. Model healthy communication; this is an opportunity to show that you can elevate conversations and engage in positive conversation. Opt out of unproductive conversations or avoid them all together.

Practice anxiety-specific self-care. Set a reminder on your phone to take 25 deep breaths at set times throughout the day. If you begin to worry, review the facts rather than general media coverage. Practice positive self-talk such as, "I am calm. I am safe. I can concentrate on other things." Imagine vivid scenes of your favorite calming, safe spaces. Carry a small item in your pocket you associate with safety and peace that you can touch when you need to. Download free coloring pages from the internet to complete. Do gentle stretching throughout your day.

Utilize self-care apps. Download Calm, Headspace, Sanvello, Insight Timer, or another app to your smartphone to help you practice slowing down, grounding yourself, and creating space to breathe.

Focus on gratitude. Jot down 10 to 15 things you are grateful for – such as your health or your family – to help you maintain perspective. The list will remind you of the people and things that provide you with strength and support.

Connect with something larger than yourself. Tapping into religious or spiritual practices, being in nature, playing with children or animals, or enjoying an art form (music, art gallery, theater, etc.) can support your emotional health and help you maintain perspective.

Volunteer. There are plenty of organizations out there that simply need your time, from volunteering at a polling place to food banks. Find one that aligns with your values. VolunteerMatch.org is a national website you can use to search for local opportunities.

Need additional support? Call CAPS to schedule an intake for telehealth services at 940-898-3801.